



Christine O. Gregoire

## ATTORNEY GENERAL OF WASHINGTON

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May 26, 2004

The Honorable Gary Locke  
Governor  
State of Washington  
P.O. Box 40002  
Olympia, WA 98504-0002

**Re: Premium Payments for Medicaid-Eligible Children**

Dear Governor Locke:

Protecting the children of the state of Washington has been a priority for the office since I became Attorney General. There are dozens of attorneys in the Office of the Attorney General who spend their professional lives protecting the health and welfare of our State's children. From that perspective, we are well aware of the absolute need of low income children to access health care. The provision of such health care is truly one of our most important "priorities of government."

I write to express concerns about implementation of the new state rule, currently scheduled to take effect July 1, 2004, that could threaten that priority provision of health care to thousands of needy children. The rule would require premium payments for certain Medicaid-eligible children in the State.

Under the terms of a proposed "demonstration waiver" from federal Medicaid requirements, these premiums originally were proposed as a means of reducing costs of the Medicaid program without reduction in services. However, I believe that such premiums on families with children will result in the unintended loss of benefits for affected children. Accordingly, I urge you to delay its implementation, currently scheduled for July 1, 2004.

Sincerely,

CHRISTINE O. GREGOIRE  
Attorney General

COG:tlr

cc: Dennis Braddock, Secretary, Department of Social and Health Services

